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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thousands of New Trees for London

A London company has committed to a long term reforestation program as a result of charges under City of London tree conservation bylaw.

In Provincial Court in London this morning, South Winds Development Inc. pleaded guilty to charges related to an incident earlier this year. The firm was fined $2,500.00 with an additional $7,500.00 being earmarked to Reforest London. In addition to those funds the company voluntarily committed to a five year, $5,000.00 a year donation to Reforest London for thousands of seedlings and trees to be planted in areas determined by the volunteer group.

The charges were the result of a cutting that took place near Lambeth in early February. After seeking professional legal advice South Winds retained the services of a contractor to begin clearing trees in a woodlot that has been identified as an environmental protection area under the City's tree conservation bylaws, without a permit. City staff, responsible for enforcement visited the site and ordered that cutting stop. No further cutting or clearing took place.

Speaking on behalf of South Winds, President Bill Graham said, "I had been told by professional consultants that many of the trees were diseased and eventually could result in widespread problems. I was also advised we were "ok" from a legal standpoint. It was my decision alone, and I was wrong. I trust the settlement and our long term pledge to ReForest London will demonstrate our commitment to the environment. We will be providing ten times more area for reforestation than the area that was cleared."

Rob Panzer, General Manager of Planning and Development for the City of London was pleased the municipal bylaw designed to protect special areas was upheld in the courts. "Today's decision and the long term commitment from the company to work with ReForest London reinforce how important it is to manage and protect our natural resources."